

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 2331

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PBOR, JO, IS, XF
SUBJECT: GOJ OFFICIAL ON WEST BANK ARRANGEMENTS

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH POLOFFS AMMAN AND JERUSALEM
MARCH 8, SHAWKAT MAHMOUD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WEST
BANK AFFAIRS OFFICE (AND OPERATIONAL LEVEL CONTACT
POINT FOR WEST BANK MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP), EXPRESSED
HIS VIEWS ON VARIETY OF ISSUES AFFECTING WEST BANK
SHOULD PEACE BE ACHIEVED. BASED ON CONVERSATIONS
WITH RESIDENTS OF WEST BANK WHOM HE SEES REGULARLY,
MAHMOUD BELIEVES IF PLEBESCITE WERE HELD TODAY
GIVING WEST BANKERS CHOICE AMONG INDEPENDENCE,
CONFIDATION WITH JORDAN AND UNION WITH JORDAN,
MAJORITY WOULD CHOOSE CONFEDERATION OPTION. IN
FORMING THIS CONFEDERATION, HE SAID, JORDAN MUST
KEEP IN MIND IMPORTANCE TO PALESTINIANS OF MAIN-
TAINING THEIR SEPARATE IDENTITY, WHICH COULD,
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FOR EXAMPLE, BE REFLECTED IN ISSUANCE OF PASSPORTS
BY "HASEMITE KINGDOM, PALESTINE SECTOR".
(COMMENT: THIS EMBELLISHMENT TO WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY
1972 UNITED ARAB KINGDOM PLAN IS FACTOR OFTEN MENTIONED
HERE BY PALESTINIANS; THIS IS FIRST TIME
IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED TO US BY SOMEONE IN OFFICIAL
CAPACITY.)

2. MANY PEOPLE, MAHMOUD SAID, ARE CONCERNED ABOUT STATEMENTS MADE BY WEST BANK PERSONALITIES IN SUPPORT OF PLO. WE SHOULD KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT WHEN THESE PEOPLE COME TO JORDAN AND CAN TALK TO HIM "FREELY," THEY TELL HIM THEY FEEL OBLIGED TO CONTINUE THIS PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE PLO BUT THEY, IN REALITY, ARE INTERESTED IN REASONABLE SOLUTION TO WEST BANK/PALESTINIAN ISSUES WITH OR WITHOUT PLO. MAHMOUD SAID MAYOR KHALAF OF RAMALLAH HAD RECENTLY EXPRESSED PRECISELY THIS VIEW TO HIM, A VIEW THAT HE PREVIOUSLY HAD NOT HEARD FROM SOMEONE LIKE KHALAF.

3. ON QUESTION OF RETURN OF REFUGEES, MAHMOUD SAID THAT MAXIMUM OF 50,000 RETURNEES CAN BE ABSORBED IN WEST BANK. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH 50,000 FIGURE SEEMS LOW, THIS IS FIRST INDICATION WE HAVE HAD THAT SUCH "DETAILS" OF WEST BANK FUTURE MAY BE UNDER GOJ CONSIDERATION.) MUCH OF REMAINDER OF RETURNEES CAN BE ABSORBED IN EAST BANK. OF COURSE, HE SAID, WE ARE TALKING ONLY ABOUT THE 450,000 REFUGEES NOW IN LEBANON, THE 300,000 IN SYRIA AND THOSE IN JORDAN. PALESTINIANS IN KUWAIT AND OTHER GULF STATES ARE NOT REFUGEES SINCE THEY LEFT WEST BANK "OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL" BEFORE
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JUNE 1967; THEY ARE CITIZENS OF JORDAN--BY VIRTURE OF HAVING GOJ PASSPORTS. MAHMOUD, BY IMPLICATION, DEFINED REFUGEES AS THOSE WHO HAVE NOT TAKEN ANOTHER NATIONALITY BUT THOSE WHO HAVE ALWAYS HAD ONLY REFUGEE IDENTITY CARDS.

4. COMMENT: GOJ HAS DONE LITTLE ADVANCE PLANNING SINCE 1972 LIMITED ARAB KINGDOM REGARDING PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR QUESTIONS THAT WILL ARISE SHOULD A WEST BANK SETTLEMENT EMERGE FROM PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. MAHMOUD'S CONVERSATION HOWEVER INDICATES HE HAS DONE SOME PERSONAL THINKING ON SOME RELATED QUESTIONS. HIS DEFINITION OF REFUGEES, FOR EXAMPLE, MAY BE POSSIBLE BASIS ON WHICH GOJ COULD BUILD IDEAS AS TO WHO SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO VOTE IN A PLEBESCITE ON SELF-DETERMINATION. EXCLUSION OF PALESTINIANS WHO NOW HAVE ANOTHER NATIONALITY WOULD OF COURSE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AROUND WHOM WEST BANK ARRANGEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE, BUT IGNORES FACT THAT CURRENT HOSTS T LARGE PALESTINIAN POPULATIONS (SUCH AS GULF STATES) HAVE NOT GRANTED CITIZENSHIP TO PALESTINIANS AND MAY NOT ALLOW

PALESTINIANS TO REMAIN. ADDED PROBLEM COULD
ARISE SINCE MAJORITY OF PALESTINIANS NOW IN GULF
CARRY GOJ PASSPORTS (OVER 300,000 PALESTINIAN-
JORDANIANS LIVE AND WORK IN THE GULF); THEY ARE,
OF COURSE, FREE TO RETURN TO JORDAN AND MIGHT
THEN PRESS FOR INCLUSION AMONG THOSE ALLOWED TO
VOTE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION.
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